

Alaska Injury Prevention Newsletter – February 2003

Alaska News and Resources

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National News and Resources

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1. On February 27 & 28, 2003, a new phase in injury prevention begins in Alaska. The Injury Prevention in a Bag! program adds the distribution of home safety devices through existing home visiting programs such as Healthy Families to create more awareness of the importance of keeping the home safe; this will help to reduce injuries among Alaska's most vulnerable population – its children. For more information contact Karen Lawfer, 465-8632 or Karen_Lawfer@health.state.ak.us.

2. It's not too early to begin thinking about summer camp and Camp Fire USA's Rural Alaska program puts the emphasis on safety. The program is tailored to the needs of individual communities and includes: cold water survival skills, water and boating safety, safe recreation activities, and community service projects. For more information please contact Gemma Miner, Director of Outdoor Programs, 907-257-8823 or gminer@campfireak.org

3. The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner recently published an article on "The Dark Side of the White Stuff" (<http://www.newsminer.com/Stories/0,1413,113~7252~1189767,00.html>). The article reminds us that there have been over 70 people killed in Alaska due to avalanches from the winter of 1985-86 to the winter of 2001-02, and then goes on to say that: "without a well-funded detection system, the only way to keep the number of accidents and deaths down is to learn. People who are heading outdoors to play should be responsible enough to find out about avalanche danger before they hit the throttle or grab their poles." Alaska is fortunate to have the Alaska Mountain Safety Center www.alaskaavalanche.com and the Southeast Alaska Avalanche Center seakaval@alaska.net providing avalanche safety courses. What Alaska doesn't have, and needs, is an avalanche-detection system similar to the ones in Washington and Oregon.

4. Child-Seat Use Hits Record Rates. Restraint use among young children rose to a record level in 2002, according to estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). An estimated 99% of infants under 1 year of age are now restrained, 94% of toddlers are restrained, and 83% of children ages 4-7 are restrained. That's the good news. The bad news is that 15% of infants under age 1, 10% of toddlers (ages 1-3), and 29% of children ages 4-7 ride in the front seat, where they are at much greater risk of severe injury or death. More information is available at the NHTSA website: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Related: According to a study in Seattle, community-wide education campaigns can significantly increase child booster seat use. Dr. Beth E. Ebel of the University of Washington and colleagues began a booster seat campaign in four communities and found that booster seat use was upped

from 13% to 26% in just 15 months. Read all about it in the Journal of the American Medical Association: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v289n7/rfull/joc21049.html>

5. It is important to buckle up children and toddlers in the car, but what about in strollers? A new study based on data from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission found that “injuries related to strollers are common, particularly among children in the first year of life.” Falling from the stroller accounted for 76% of the 64,373 stroller-related injuries to children 3 years of age and younger treated in hospital emergency departments from 1994-1998. 11% of the injuries were due to strollers tipping over. Most of the injuries were to the head or face. You can view the entire article at <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/110/5/e62>

6. The Council on Family Health, a nonprofit organization established in 1966, is dedicated to educating consumers about the proper use of nonprescription and prescription medicines, dietary supplements, home safety, and personal health. www.sfhinfo.org They have a great pamphlet available on their website: “Medicines & You: A Guide for Older Americans”.

7. Just a reminder that March 16-22 is National Poison Prevention Week. www.poisonprevention.org. Call Zoann Murphy, 465-1185, if you need stickers, magnets, brochures, or posters to distribute.

8. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission tracks injuries or deaths in over 15,000 consumer products. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at 800-638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at 800-638-8270. Other information and product recalls are available on the website: www.cpsc.gov.



Stay warm and safe while you're waiting for spring!

This message has been compiled by the Section of Community Health and EMS (CHEMS), Alaska Division of Public Health and sent to subscribers of the AK-Prev and AHELP list-serves. It has also been sent as a "bcc" to others in Alaska including Public Health Centers, SAFE KIDS coalitions, Native Health Organizations, and regional EMS Councils and Coordinators who may be interested and active in injury prevention and health promotion. The purpose is to share resources, breaking news, training opportunities, product recalls, and opinions to help prevent injuries to Alaskans. Feedback and contributions are encouraged. Contributions can be directed to Mary Krom, mary_krom@health.state.ak.us

Link for the AK-Prev and AK-EMSC list serve: http://chems.alaska.gov/ems_list_servers.htm

Link for AHELP list serve: <http://www.auroraweb.com/ahec>